

## Seattle Police Email Community Newsletter

### March 8, 2013



Dear Community Friends,

#### She's Baaaaack!!!

Way back in 2005, we shared information about a woman using the names of "Kim" and "Pam" going to the homes of elderly women and using a ruse to gain entry into the home. She had used claims of being a block watch captain, a new neighbor, pregnant, or having car problem. She has used hardship stories to gain sympathy. She has asked to use the phone or bathroom to gain entry and then asked for or just outright demanded money before she would leave. At times, she has taken whatever was within reach when the homeowner stepped away to get her a glass of water or money, or was otherwise distracted. She was active in south Seattle from Columbia City to Rainier Beach. She was eventually arrested.

Well, "Kim" is back and running the same scam in the same areas. She is going door-to-door, asking for money. One of the hardship stories this time is that she has kids and needs to leave her abusive husband. She is described as 5'3", 180 lbs, African American female about 48 years old. She has an associated vehicle, a white 1994 Nissan Maxima.

#### What To Do If An Unknown Person Comes To Your Door

- Answer the door (let the person know someone is home in case it is a burglar looking for an unoccupied home) **but do not open the door**. Talk to the person through the door. Don't worry about being rude; this is about your safety, not their feelings.
- Do not give the person cash.
- If someone claims to be in distress, offer to call 911 for them; again, keep the door closed.
- If you are suspicious about the person, call 911 and give the best description of the person possible (height weight, body shape, skin tone, hair, age, clothing, any associated vehicle) as well as the direction the person went when they left your home.
- Alert neighbors to the person going door to door so they are aware and can be watchful.

Regarding "Kim," "Pam" or whoever may be going door-to-door asking for money: just say no. These individuals not only tug on heartstrings to get you to freely give them money, they also use the opportunity when someone opened the door to take whatever was within arm's reach from the door while the homeowner was distracted.

The Seattle Police Department would like to talk to "Kim" and/or "Pam," so if you see her, please call 911.

#### Door-To-Door Sellers

We often get the question regarding door-to-door solicitors. In Seattle, all door-to-door sellers must display the City issued residential sales identification on their outer clothing. This ID shows the seller's photo and name as well as the name of the business and product or service they represent.

- Door-to-door sellers can only sell the product or service listed on their City issued ID.
- Legitimate company representatives will be properly identified and will be carrying a copy of their company's business license.
- Door to door sellers cannot come to your home before 8am or after 9pm.
- They need to honor any posted No Solicitor signs.
- If business is being conducted in Seattle, a Seattle business license is required. If you have any questions about whether a company is properly licensed, you can check online at <http://seattle.gov/biz/> or call the City of Seattle's division of Business Regulatory Services at 206-684-8136; after business hours, you may call 911 for police response.
- **Disclosure Required:** Each residential seller shall, immediately upon contacting the prospective buyer, disclose their name, company and the product or service represented.
- If you are not interested in what you see and what the individual has to say do not open your door and request through the door that the individual leave.
- If requested to do so, they are required by law to leave.

**Exemptions** from the Residential Sellers license requirement include individuals who are:

- (1) selling newspapers;
  - (2) selling perishable food items;
  - (3) holding home sales parties;
  - (4) acting on behalf of a regulated utility;
  - (5) soliciting orders for goods, which orders are to be accepted and goods delivered at a future date from a place outside of Washington State.
- Political canvassers and candidates are also exempted from the door-to-door sales guidelines, but these individuals generally observe them.
  - **Use Good Judgment:** If the seller is properly identified and is representing a product or service of interest to you, you may choose to do business with them. It is safer not to allow the salesperson into your home.
  - Avoid paying immediately (especially with cash or credit card). Instead, find out from the seller how you can order directly from the company or receive the bill upon receipt of the product/service. If the salesperson is concerned about losing their commission for the sale, offer to provide their name when placing your order.
  - Do not let the seller into your home to use the bathroom, the phone or get a drink of water. These requests may be used as a means of gaining access to your home to continue with their pressure tactics, to commit a crime at that time, or to check out your home for a future break-in.
  - If you feel intimidated, pressured, or threatened at any time, call 911.

Contact the licensing office directly if you have questions about the business license or any of the above exemptions.

### **It's Okay To Call**

Whenever I do a community meeting block watch meeting or informal Q&A session, people often tell me that they are hesitant to call 911. Whether it's because they didn't think the situation warranted calling 911, they didn't want to bother the police, or the call taker they had from a previous 911 contact was rude, many people are reluctant to use the system.

Please, use the system. Let us assure you that calling in activity or behavior that you feel is unusual or out of place is not a burden; it's how we know what's going on. We rely on *you* to tell us.

Sometimes, however, a person may not know what suspicious behavior *looks* like. By knowing your neighbors and the routine activities, whether on the block you live or the areas where you work and do business, the better able you are to identify those things that seem suspicious. The more you know your neighbors on the block, which vehicles belong, which children live in the area, the better able you are to identify those suspicious people, vehicles, activities and behaviors.

If it's suspicious to you, it's worth talking with your neighbors about it and worth reporting it to 911.

When calling 911, be prepared to give an accurate description of what is happening and where you are in relation to what is happening. There is a lot of information the call taker will ask of you. Answer to the best of your ability and be patient with him/her. They are gathering information about a situation they may be sending officers in to, and that situation may be dangerous. If you don't know the answer to a particular question, it's okay to say you don't know. Don't think that because you don't have all the answers that you can't call. Please call and report. If you don't report, officers can't respond.

When you call 911, focus on what is happening now, even if you are reporting situation where there is a history of activity (neighbors who are constantly fighting with each other, for example). The call taker is trying to determine the nature of the call and what resources need to be sent; he or she doesn't need you to relate the background story.

We can't stress enough; if it is suspicious to you, do not hesitate to call 911. It's okay to call. You're not bothering us.

Thank you for all you do for your neighborhoods. Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

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